

STUDENTS as EXPLORERS

Cooperation with EMESS
(East Midlands Earth Structure Society)
2011-2014



The happiest students on (E)arth.

Who knows that Lincolnshire had its own absolutely unique historical building style? No, we are not talking about the Cathedral but about dwellings sometimes referred to as 'Lincolnshire Mud and Stud' (M+S). The name is not very flattering, but the heritage is genuine and worth being proud of. Similarly to other more popular 'wattle and doub' or 'cob', it is also a vernacular technique, with this difference that few people know about it and there are few remaining buildings still standing in Lincolnshire and in... Jamaica, where emigrants from Boston and Lincoln once carried it across.



This adventure started when dr. Marcin M. Kołakowski, who is researching natural and alternative architecture, decided to attend a meeting organised by a local group of practitioners and enthusiasts of local architecture called EMESS (East Midland Earth Structure Society). 'Strike while the iron is hot!' said Chairman David Glew and already at that meeting they started to sketch plans for cooperation and for future practical workshops for students.



It was 3 years ago and since then students of architecture had a chance to participate in three workshops, each of them with a different character. During the first one in 2012, students had an opportunity to meet Prof Louis Nelson from the University of Virginia and listen to his talk about the application of Lincolnshire methods in America. In 2013, students got involved in a real renovation project. That year, students had a chance to participate in intensive workshops at Tumby Moorside Barn, where five specialists introduced students to key aspects of building conservation. Despite being a listed building, the barn uniquely received a permission to hold workshops there. It does not happen often that a listed building can be experimented on, but thanks to this arrangement our students got a real insight into traditional details, which they could touch and repair.



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"This experience is great because it offers a valuable introduction to building techniques and properties of materials, which students will be able to benefit from even while designing contemporary buildings," said Dr Kolakowski.

Workshops like that could be real fun. It seems that students who had hands-on experience plastering or mixing clay are the happiest students on Earth ... or should we say "on earth".

"It is also a pleasure for us to be able to pass our knowledge and experience and we are very happy to cooperate with the University," said current chairman of EMESS Rodney Cousins.



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Workshops and lectures organised by EMESS became a catalyst for setting up a student group ArchiLOVE, which has been set up by students in order to promote natural and alternative architecture. Also, one of our best students - Kim Gault - has decided to take the opportunity to spend her year out developing skills under the supervision of EMESS member Trevor Oliver. As she admits, it is very likely that this very experience will direct her career towards conservation of historical buildings.

